



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Policy 24-10

Policy and Procedure

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Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

September 17, 2018

Issued by: Fire Chief Scott E. Goldstein

Policy Number: 24-10

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-3 (b)

Supersedes: New Policy

Effective Date: October 1, 2018

SECTION 1. Purpose:

To establish a policy and procedure that adopts the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Operations Manual which will govern the UAS Program for the MCFRS while establishing a department standard for UAS operations and clearly defining the conditions and parameters while engaged in UAS operations to reduce the probability of damage, injury, and/or mortality.

SECTION 2. Applicability:

All MCFRS personnel.

SECTION 3. Background:

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue service has established a UAS program to support and enhance operations. The UAS program is intended to boost overall situational awareness, search, rescue, command and control needs, by bringing faster, more reliable information to incident commanders and decision makers, during emergency and planned events. With approximately 500 square miles protected by the MCFRS, UAS operations will increase safety in emergency situations and operational proficiency. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) governs UAS operations, and provides regulations that specify required procedures and guidelines to safely operate a UAS.

SECTION 4. Definitions:

- a. **Unmanned Aircraft System(s) (UAS)** An aircraft and its associated elements and equipment, weighing less than 55 pounds without a human pilot onboard and is controlled from an operator on the ground. Frequently identified as drones or Unmanned aircraft (UA)
- b. **Digital Multimedia Evidence (DME)** -- Digital recording of images, sounds, and associated data being used for criminal or investigative purposes.



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SECTION 5. Policy:

It is the policy of the MCFRS to utilize UAS for the focused and limited purpose of public safety missions. Deployment of UAS and the data collected from deployments will be consistent with FAA requirements. The MCFRS UAS Operations Manual specifies both operational and administrative functions of the MCFRS UAS Program.

SECTION 6. Responsibility:

The UAS Program will be organized as the MCFRS Aviation Unit under control of the Special Operations Section within the Division of Operations.

SECTION 7. Procedure:

a. UAS Use

1. MCFRS will obtain applicable authorizations, waivers and certificates required by the FAA prior to deploying or operating the UAS. These authorizations, waivers and certifications shall be maintained and current.
2. The UAS will be operated only by licensed personnel (pilots and crew members) who have been trained and certified in the operation of the system and authorized by the Special Operations Section Chief or designee.
3. The UAS equipment and all data, images, video, and metadata captured, recorded, or otherwise produced by the equipment is the sole property of the MCFRS.
4. Digital Media Evidence (DME) will be maintained in accordance with Fire and Explosive Investigations Unit requirements.

b. Privacy:

Personnel will consider the protection of individual civil rights and the reasonable expectation of privacy as a key component of any decision made to deploy the UAS. Pilots will take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images that infringe upon an individual's right to privacy. This includes consideration by the Pilot on when to turn on/off the recording function and the route of the UAS during deployment.

SECTION 8. Cancellation:

This is a new policy.

SECTION 9. Attachments:



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Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Gold".

Fire Chief

September 17, 2018

Date

